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On the Ground: The Oregon Conservation Strategy at Work

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August 2010

With this issue, the ODFW On the Ground newsletter has been sharing Conservation Strategy success stories for four years. If you have one to tell, please e-mail the editor.

Click here to [read the newsletter and see photos online.](#)

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Military Restores Upland Prairie and Oak Savanna at Camp Adair

A red flag is flying over the pistol range on the only piece of the World War II-era Camp Adair still in use by the military and the sound of gunshots rings across the August afternoon.

Jeff Mach, Natural Resource Specialist for the Oregon Military Department, conducts a tour of the facility from the perimeter of the property, pointing out recent landscape restoration work and explaining his plans for the future.

Environmentally, Camp Adair is valuable property. Located at the intersection of the foothills and the prairie and adjacent to a wildlife area, the land supports a number of key habitats and species. One of the most important is Kincaid's lupine, host plant to Fender's blue butterfly, which was federally listed as threatened in 2000. The butterfly was listed as endangered the same year.

"It's been a challenge. We have no dedicated natural resources management budget for Camp Adair—to the military 500 acres is a postage stamp—but we have partners who are helping us," says Mach.

Camp Adair, north of Corvallis was established in 1941 as a nearly-60,000-acre military training facility. Deactivated in 1946, the property was divided into multiple uses. About 2,000 acres is now managed by ODFW as the EE Wilson Wildlife Area. The present-Camp Adair, still owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is licensed to the Oregon Military Department. Since deactivation, the landscape has not been heavily used.

"Ninety percent of the installation's use is on our rifle and pistol ranges. Ten percent is land navigation and similar maneuver activities, so we are able to manage the impact of training," says Mach. "Our biggest problem is fifty years of what I call benign neglect."

Conifers and seedling fruit trees overtook oak woodlands and encroached onto the savanna. Invasive meadow knapweed ran wild and choked areas that contained Kincaid's lupine.

Since Mach and his partners began restoration work, they have removed fir trees from more than 100 acres, mowed 150 acres and fought the good fight against knapweed and other invasives.

Today, patches of Kincaid's lupine are marked with stakes to identify them as off limits to activities that could injure the plants.

"We have a couple of more years of mechanical work to do before we can transition to periodic open burning to maintain the prairie and savanna areas," says Mach. "Our goal is to eradicate the knapweed and open up the oak habitat, so we can begin conducting prescribed burns, which we believe will be sustainable."

Resources to conduct the restoration work comes primarily from the Bonneville Power Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Institute for Applied Ecology and ODFW. The Military Department supplements these resources with funding from the Army and the National Guard Bureau and in-house labor.

The mission of the 527-acre Camp Adair site is to train soldiers of the Oregon Army National Guard. Other military and law enforcement agencies also train on the installation periodically.

For information about the [Oregon Military Department](#), visit its website.

[Learn about Camp Adair's military history.](#)

[Institute for Applied Ecology Helps Restore Camp Adair Ecosystem](#)



*Kincaid's lupine, federally listed as threatened in 2000, grows at Camp Adair.
Photo by Tom Kaye, Institute for Applied Ecology.*

[Click image for larger view](#)



From left: Institute for Applied Ecology staff Tom Kaye and Oliver Grath meet with Jeff Mach, Oregon Military Department, at Camp Adair north of Corvallis.

[Click image for larger view](#)



Today 90 percent of Camp Adair's use is on its rifle and pistol ranges.

[Click image for larger view](#)

The Institute for Applied Ecology is one of the partners in the restoration work at Camp Adair focused on at-risk prairie and wetland habitats and species.

According to Tom Kaye, Executive Director of the Institute, these habitats are important to Benton County's conservation plan which is a step down of the Oregon Conservation Strategy.

"In the Camp Adair project area, we have three of the rarest habitats in western Oregon—wet meadow, upland prairie and oak savanna—as well as two federally listed plants, Kincaid's lupine and Nelson's checker-mallow," says Kaye. "Work here benefits a number of species, especially because of the adjacent wildlife area."

The Institute's Habitat Restoration Director, Oliver Grah, is at work in the prairie and oak savanna areas that have been encroached by Douglas fir, big-leaf maple, hawthorn, apple trees and invasive plants, chocking out Oregon white oak.

Much progress has been made this year: trees and shrubs were removed from 107 acres and 146 acres were mowed to impede the growth of non-native vegetation. Over the next two years, more aggressive weed control, including prescribed fire and native plant seeding, will take place to transform these areas into a more natural habitat.

"If we can get the property to the point where we can reintroduce fire, the native plants and habitats will improve," says Grah, gesturing to a hillside from which conifers were removed this year. "Without the use of fire in these areas, we allow tree species to pioneer the wet meadows and upland sites."

"We need to seed with native plants to provide better structure in these areas and improve habitat for grassland birds," says Kaye. "Removing invasives and conifers isn't enough since the native seeds are generally lacking at these sites."

Planting natives is not as easy as it sounds. Seeds for many species are in short supply or unavailable. There is no easy answer to this problem and the solution will require cooperators to work together to create a seed bank that will more effectively meet restoration demands.

[Visit the Institute's website](#)

[See Benton County's Prairie Conservation Strategy website](#)

Attention Land Managers: One-day Workshop that's for the Birds

If you maintain landscaping or restore habitats by mowing, cutting trees and shrubs, or removing invasive species, the Oregon Zoo and partners have a one-day workshop for you. Sometimes these land management practices can harm birds, but they don't have to with some planning.

The *Managing Land with Minimal Impact to Birds* workshop will take place on Oct. 15, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Zoo.

Designed for landscapers, park managers, road maintenance crews, Soil and Water Conservation District personnel, private landowners and others, the workshop will cover how declining bird species in the Willamette Valley are affected by land management practices and how timing and best practices can be altered to minimize impacts. [See the agenda](#) (pdf) and [register online now](#). The cost of \$31 covers breakfast, lunch and hors d'oeuvres.

Ten years of State Wildlife Action Grants

In 2000, Congress created the State Wildlife Grants Program which, for the first time, provided funding to state fish and wildlife agencies for the management of non-game species. The funding was distributed to states with the condition that each state develop a comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy—in Oregon it's called the Oregon Conservation Strategy.

This September marks the 10 year anniversary of this federal program, which is committed to help keep common species common and to conserve fish and wildlife species before they become rare.

In Oregon, State Wildlife Grants fuel work on sensitive, threatened and endangered species; aquatic and terrestrial invasive species prevention; implementation of the Oregon Conservation and Nearshore strategies; and Conservation Strategy Implementation grants among other things. Specific projects in 2009-10 include a grassland bird program, wolf plan management, a Strategy climate change initiative and peregrine falcon monitoring.

A number of projects funded by State Wildlife Grants have been reported in this newsletter including [development of an amphibian monitoring protocol](#), [wetland restoration](#), [mapping the nearshore ocean](#), [saving a white oak savannah](#), [studying native fish](#) and the [2009 peregrine falcon survey](#).

A new round of Conservation Strategy Implementation grants will be made available later this year; watch upcoming newsletters for information.

Still time to comment on greater-sage grouse conservation plan

The public is invited to comment on the updated greater sage-grouse conservation plan. Written comments will be accepted through the Dec. 3 Commission meeting. To be included in the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission information briefing materials, comments must be received by Nov. 15 for the Dec. 3 meeting.

Comments can be mailed to the headquarters' address or e-mailed to sage_grouse@state.or.us. A briefing on the updated draft plan will be presented to the Commission at the Sept. 30 meeting in Bend where public comment on the plan will also be taken. The plan is scheduled for presentation and proposed for adoption at the Commission's Dec. 3 meeting in Portland.

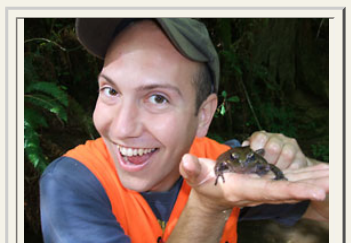
[Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Assessment and Strategy for Oregon](#) (pdf)

ONE SMALL THING



Patches of Kincaid's lupine are marked with stakes to identify them as off limits to activities that could injure the plants.

[Click image for larger view](#)



Brian Bangs, co-author of a recent amphibian distribution report, is an expert in native frog identification. - Photo ODFW-

[Click image for larger view](#)

The [Federal Trade Commission's website](#) has ideas for ways to reduce your home heating and cooling bills—one room at a time. The FTC is a consumer protection agency.

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[On the Ground newsletter archives](#)

ABOUT THE OREGON CONSERVATION STRATEGY

The [Oregon Conservation Strategy](#) provides a blueprint and action plan for the long-term conservation of Oregon's native fish and wildlife and their habitats through a non-regulatory, statewide approach to conservation. It was developed by ODFW with the help of a diverse coalition of Oregonians including scientists, conservation groups, landowners, extension services, anglers, hunters, and representatives from agriculture, forestry and rangelands.

EDITOR
Meg Kenagy
Oregon Conservation Strategy Communications coordinator
(503) 947-6021
meg.b.kenagy@state.or.us

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3406 Cherry Avenue N.E. :: Salem, OR 97303 :: Main Phone (503) 947-6000 or (800) 720-ODFW [6339]

Do you have a question or comment for ODFW? Contact ODFW's Public Service Representative at: odfw.info@state.or.us

Do you want to enter your opinion about a specific issue into the public record? Contact: odfw.comments@state.or.us

